

# Hillandale News

No 204 June 1995



# MECHANICAL MUSIC

Tuesday 12th September 1995



*A G&T. Oak Gramophone pedestal sold recently at auction for £2500.*

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# Hillandale News

The Official Journal of The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society

Founded in 1919

Patrons: Oliver Berliner and Kathleen Darby



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**Front cover illustration:** Ruby Helder. See the article by Charles Haynes on page 291.  
(Photograph by courtesy of Pavilion Records Ltd.)

## EDITOR'S DESK



### Newcomer

I would like to welcome the arrival on the record collecting scene of a new journal *International Classical Record Collector*. This is published quarterly by General Gramophone Publications Ltd. and is edited by Alan Sanders. It is devoted to those who collect historic recordings of classical music. While the emphasis is on the LP era there are articles in the first issue on restoring historical performances to CD and there are reviews of recently published CDs of historical performances. The LP is now part of the history of sound recording. There are very few LPs published these days. *I.C.R.C.* reviews some classic performances that have been re-issued on LP in high-grade vinyl. I believe this magazine fills a gap in the market and I wish it a long and successful life.

### Dedicated Pre-amplifier

I have been sent details of a pre-amplifier that has been specially designed to cater for the needs of the 78 collector. This device measures 165 x 103 x 56mm and has 6 circuits each with a different recording characteristic. It will cost anything between DM210 and DM330, excluding VAT and postage, depending on demand. Those interested should contact Hans-Joachim Schröer, [REDACTED] Berlin, Germany, Tel: [REDACTED] (private), [REDACTED] (business) or Fax: [REDACTED] This looks on paper to be an extremely useful device and I shall be contacting the address given for further details.

### June Meeting

One of the rare chances these days to hear a cylinder based programme occurs on June 15th when George Frow and Dominic Combe will be presenting *The Blues and The Gray*. One or two machines from Dominic's collection will be used. All are welcome.

### July Meeting

A mid-summer meal will be available on July 20th with *A Recorded Dinner, Cooked and Served* by Tom Little. Amongst the joys will be Mozart Paté, Champagne and Abdullah cigarettes. This is the ideal menu for this time of year and our readers are invited to partake.

Please note that material intended for inclusion in *Hillendale News* must reach the Editor not later than **six weeks before the first day of the month of issue**.

Hence the deadline for the **August** issue will be **15th June 1995**.

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Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor.

# RUBY HELDER - THE LADY/GIRL TENOR

## by Charles Haynes

Yes, she existed, although the above wasn't her real name, and she certainly possessed a most extraordinary voice. She was not, as some have suggested, a transvestite man. Biographical details about her are, however, not easy to obtain. When I was asked to produce a reissue on CD of her recordings (Pearl CD GEMM 9035) I later found that much of what I had written in the booklet was, to my dismay, inaccurate. Perhaps I may now give a better account of this remarkable artist.

'Ruby' (and I'll continue to call her that for the sake of convenience) was in fact Emma Jane Holder, born in Bristol on 3rd March 1890, daughter of Thomas Holder, a dairyman. It would seem either that the family was a musical one or that Ruby pursued her artistic inclinations independently, for on 13th September 1907 the *Western Daily Press* was able to report that "The Bristol girl baritone [could her voice really have started as low as that?] is well known to local audiences. Having completed four month's successful engagements in London, she is now singing with success at the Apollo in Paris. We hear she has received offers from Berlin, Moscow, St.Petersburg and the USA." (All of the above information, including a photocopy press article, was received from Ruby's surviving relatives, whom I travelled to Bristol to meet.)

In the following year she made her first records for Pathé (cylinders, eventually pantographed to disc), and very good they are, too.

It is at this point that confusion sets in. *Who's Who in Music* (1915) states that Ruby studied at the Guildhall School of

Music under Charles Tinney; yet the records of that establishment (which are, they admit, not entirely complete) do not note her attendance there. According to the evidence of Ruby herself, she studied with the great baritone Sir Charles Santley for seven years; when could she have fitted this in? As is known, Santley wrote a eulogistic testimonial for her but, infuriatingly, it is not dated. It must however be genuine, for Santley died in 1922, and the piece which he wrote was in general circulation before then.

We know<sup>1</sup> that she bounced from one side of the Atlantic to the other, making records for various companies. On an early trip she met Caruso and other musical prominent. She was, according to an article published at some point in a British magazine<sup>2</sup> promised a Metropolitan audition. Unfortunately, the management of that very 'establishment' house became worried at the prospect of engaging an artist who might be considered a freak. The audition was called off, despite Ruby's having put many hours work into studying and practising the part of the Jongleur in Massenet's opera *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame*.

There is more to be had from this article<sup>2</sup>. Importantly, she asserts that: "It has been said that my tenor voice is the result of an operation. This absurd story is based on surgery which took place when I was eighteen, the object being merely to remove some nodules which had formed about my vocal chords." We learn also that Ruby was, for some time, a respected teacher of voice in Iowa.

Early publicity material states (and this is confirmed in the magazine article mentioned above) that Ruby sang in New York's most important Synagogue. Yet she was not, so the family assure me, in any way Jewish! One ponders, interminably.

The repertoire of Ruby was a wide one, and encompassed opera (arias sung in concert, and broadcast), oratorio and popular ballads of the day. A part from *M'Appari* from Flotow's *Marta* and the odd excerpt from the 'English' Ring', all her recordings fall into the last mentioned category. Also, Reuter's brief obituary, published in *The Times*, states that she had appeared on the Music Hall stage. According to John Jordan, his father attempted to attend one of her recitals shortly after the Great War, but could not get in! This, and the testimony of the lady herself in the above mentioned British magazine<sup>2</sup> that the advent of broadcasting in the early 1920s had helped her considerably, would seem to indicate that her career was moving upwards. Her activities on record suggest a rather different story; her final HMV ones were made in 1921, and everything had been deleted by the end of 1924.

Had the novelty appeal worn off, or was the voice not what it had been? The latter seems more likely. If you listen to the 1908 recordings you will find, I think, that she indeed sounds like tenor, but in the late HMVs she's much more of a contralto. An element of support for this point of view is to be found in *The Times* which, reviewing a recent Ruby recital, commented on 19th June 1924: "The voice has something in its quality akin to the true tenor; otherwise it might be described as a contralto...it is quite lacking in the power and expression of the tenor's top register." She nevertheless continued to broadcast, the final one being made on 1st July 1927.<sup>3</sup> Ruby retired officially in 1935.

At some point Ruby met the American graphic artist Chesley Bonestell and the two were married, in England, in 1920. Bonestell was born in 1888 and died in Carmel, California on 11th June 1986.<sup>4</sup> Noted for his avant-garde astronomical paintings, he worked in many media, and was a well-respected innovator. After the Great War he worked in Britain for *The Illustrated London News*, but returned to the USA in 1927; this, presumably, accounts for the date of Ruby's last British broadcast.

Of her final years I know nothing, save that she died on 21st November 1938. I have a photocopy of the Death Certificate, and it states that the cause of demise was "Cirrhosis of the liver, also mitral stenosis of the heart, and ascites". Qualified medical opinion tells me that she was probably an alcoholic. This condition may well have been brought on by depression engendered by the early collapse of what at first seemed a most promising career. I have also a photocopy of a letter written by Bonestell, a few days after his wife's death, to one of her English relatives. Obviously a thoughtful and sensitive man, he tries to spare as much pain as he can.

As can be gathered from my interpolation of the many personal credits seen above, it is well-nigh impossible to put together an article on such a complex subject without the friendly assistance of colleagues; my thanks, again, to you all.

### Acknowledgements

Thanks to Frank Andrews, Alan Kelly, Bill Shaman, Ron Taylor and Len Watts for help in compiling the discography.

### References

- 1) Frank Andrews
- 2) Joe Pengelly
- 3) Graham Oakes
- 4) Peter Adamson and Bill Shaman

# Ruby Helder Discography

Matrix	Single side	Double side	Title	Composer
--------	-------------	-------------	-------	----------

## Pathé Frères, London 1908 (First issued August 1908):

77280+^\$	765		<i>My Dreams</i>	P. Tosti
77281#	766		<i>The Lily of Killarney</i> (from <i>Eily Mavourneen</i> )	Julius Benedict
77282	765		<i>I'll Sing Thee Songs of Araby</i> (from Cantata <i>Lalla Rookh</i> )	Frederick Clay
77283*^£	767		<i>Come into the Garden, Maud</i> (from <i>Maud - Song Cycle</i> )	Balfe
77284+^#	766		<i>Even Bravest Heart</i> (from <i>Faust</i> )	Gounod
77285	767		<i>Good Night Beloved</i>	Balfe
All with the Band of H.M. Scots Guards				

\* Reissued on Diamond Double Disc 0262, November 1915

+ Reissued on Diamond Double Disc 0232, July 1916

# Reissued on Pathé 'White Rooster' Disc 20547, February 1918

^ Reissued on Pathé 'White Rooster' Disc 20548, February 1918

\$ also issued as U.S. Pathé Paper Label 4002

£ also issued later in U.K. on Pathé Paper Label 30384

## The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 23rd March 1911:

4820f	Not issued		Test - No title
4821f	Not issued		Test - No title

## The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 24th July 1911:

ab13858e	7-53007		<i>M'appari tutt'amor</i> w. orch. (from <i>Martha</i> )	Flotow
Ac5253f	Not issued		<i>Mountain Lovers</i> w. piano	W. H. Squire
Ac5254f	03249	C 450	<i>Mountain Lovers</i> w. piano	W. H. Squire

## The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 6th October 1911:

Ab14247e	3899	B 332	<i>I'll Sing The Songs of Araby</i> w. piano	Frederick Clay
Ac5547f	03275	C 449	<i>The Last Watch</i> w. piano	Pinsuti
Ac5548f	Not issued		<i>My Queen</i> w. piano	Blumenthal

## J. E. Hough Ltd., Edison Bell Velvet Face, 1911:

2601V		Edison Bell test label 1066	<i>Tom Bowling</i>	Dibdin
2606V		Edison Bell test label 1066	<i>Price Again</i>	?
2608-V*		VF 1068	<i>My Dreams</i> w. piano	P. Tosti
2609-R		VF 1068	<i>The Palms</i> w. piano	J. B. Faure
* later issued on Winner 2182				

## The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 24th July 1912:

Ac6385f	Not issued		<i>Once Again</i> w. piano	Sir Arthur Sullivan
Ac6386f	03289		<i>Once Again</i> w. piano	Sir Arthur Sullivan
Ac6387f	03296		<i>The Lily of Killarney</i> w. piano (from <i>Eily Mavourneen</i> )	Julius Benedict

**The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 7th August 1912:**

y15443e	Not issued		Since Love is Mine w. piano
z6441f	03293	C 449	My Dreams w. piano

Deacon  
P. Tosti

**The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 24th October 1912:**

z6714f	Not issued		Nirvana w. piano
z6715f	03301		Nirvana w. piano
	(Not issued - original defective)		
z6716f	03308	C 450	Thora w. piano
z6717f	Private issue		a) How dear to me the hour w. piano b) The Legacy w. piano (When in death I shall calm recline)

Stephen Adams  
Stephen Adams  
Stephen Adams  
Thomas Moore  
Thomas Moore

**The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 12th November 1912:**

y15965e	Not issued		So Fare Thee Well w. Piano (from Doris)
z6786f	03304		Mona w. piano
z6787f	Not issued		The Green Isle of Erin w. piano
z6788f	03365	C 563	The Green Isle of Erin w. piano

Cellier  
Stephen Adams  
J. L. Roeckel  
J. L. Roeckel

**Columbia Graphophone Company, December 1913:**

47442-?	A2401*	Berceuse: Angels Guard Thee from Jocelyn	Godard
47447-?	2938	Berceuse: Angels Guard Thee from Jocelyn	Godard
47455-1	A2401*	When You and I were Young, Maggie	Butterfield
47455-?	2938	When You and I were Young, Maggie	Butterfield
36842-1	481	My Dreams	P. Tosti
	also on A5534*		
36843-1	501	The Lily of Killarney w. orch.	Julius Benedict
	also on A5534*#	(from Eily Mavourneen)	
36844-2	501	Then You'll Remember Me w.orch.	M. Balfe
	also on A5548*	(from The Bohemian Girl)	
	all with orchestra		
	* U.S. Columbia issue		
	# also issued in dubbed form on IRCC 3112 in December 1951		

**Columbia Graphophone Company, c. January 1914:**

36882-2	481	Dear Love, Remember Me w. orch.	Marshall
	also on A5548*		
* U.S. Columbia issue			

**The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 3rd February 1913:**

y16268e	Not issued		Mary w. piano
z7066f	Not issued		Dear Love, Remember Me w. piano
z7067f	03530	C 758	The Message w. piano
z7068f	03411	C 420	My Queen w. piano

Richardson  
Marshall  
Blumenthal  
J. Blumenthal

**The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 18th March 1913:**

Ac7220f	03352	C 453	Be Thou Faithful unto Death (from St. Paul) w. organ
Ac7221f	03345		Onaway, Awake Beloved w. piano (from Song of Hiawatha Op.30)
Ac7222f	Not issued		Dear Love, Remember Me w. organ
Ac7223f	03329	C 448	Dear Love, Remember Me w. piano

Mendelssohn  
Coleridge-Taylor  
C. Marshall  
C. Marshall

Ac7224f	Not issued		I Listened for your Coming w. organ and piano	Gerald F. Kahn
Ac7225f	03332		I Listened for your Coming w. organ and piano	Gerald F. Kahn

**The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 13th August 1913:**

Ak16883e	3982	B 331	<i>I Looked into your Heart</i> w. composer at the piano	Gerald F. Kahn
Ak16884e	3996	B 331	<i>Believe it True</i> w. piano	F. A. Coote
AL7461f	Not issued		<i>If with all your Hearts</i> w. organ (from <i>Elijah</i> Op.70)	Mendelssohn
AL7462f	03379	C 419	<i>If with all your Hearts</i> w. organ (from <i>Elijah</i> Op.70)	Mendelssohn
AL7463f	03342		<i>Eleanore</i> Op.36 No.6 w. piano	Coleridge-Taylor

**The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 11th November 1914:**

Ak18495e	Not issued		<i>Bonnie Mary of Argyle</i> w. piano	Nelson
AL8157f	03393	C 448	<i>The Call of the Motherhood</i> w. piano	Sibley
AL8158f	03410	C 419	<i>You are all the World to be</i> w. piano	W. H. Squire
AL8159f	03412	C 420	<i>For All Eternity</i> w. organ	Mascheroni
AL8160f	Not issued		<i>For All Eternity</i> w. organ	Mascheroni

**The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 23rd November 1914:**

Ak18574e	2-3092	B 300	<i>Thine</i> w. piano	Hemery
Ak18575e	2-3093	B 300	<i>One Word, One Smile</i> w. piano	Tarrant
Ak18576e	2-3089	B 298	<i>Have you forgotten?</i> w. piano	Henry Geehl
Ak18577e	2-3088	B 298	<i>Tell me you Care</i> w. piano	Elliott
Ak18578e	Not issued		<i>Tell me you Care</i> w. piano	Elliott

**The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 24th November 1914:**

AL8172f	03397	C 563	<i>Beauty's Eyes</i> w. piano	P. Tosti
AL8173f	Not issued		<i>Beauty's Eyes</i> w. piano	P. Tosti

**The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 30th November 1914:**

Ak18621e	2-3090	B 299	<i>To be Near You</i> w. piano	F. A. Coote
Ak18622e	Not issued		<i>To be Near You</i> w. piano	F. A. Coote
Ak18623e	Not issued		<i>When Other Lips</i> w. piano (from <i>The Bohemian Girl</i> )	M. Balfe
Ak18624e	2-3091	B 299	<i>When Other Lips</i> w. piano (from <i>The Bohemian Girl</i> )	M. Balfe
Ak18625e	Not issued		<i>Courage</i> w. piano	van den Heuvel
Ak18626e	2-3051	B 332	<i>Courage</i> w. piano ( <i>The Daily Telegraph Recruiting Song</i> )	van den Heuvel

**The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 27th May 1920:**

Ho5683ae	2-3448	B 1118	<i>The Sweetest Song of All</i>	Wakefield
Ho5684ae	2-3449	B 1118	<i>Moon of the Desert</i>	Herbert Oliver

both w. orch. cond. George W. Byng

**The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 28th May 1920:**

Ho4412af	03733	C 990	<i>Thou Hast Departed</i>	Herbert Oliver
Ho4413af	03734	C 990	<i>Your Golden Eyes</i>	Sanderson
Ho4413-2af	Not issued		<i>Your Golden Eyes</i>	Sanderson

all w. orchestra cond. George W. Byng

**The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 7th September 1920:**

Ho5847	Not issued	<i>Roses of Memory</i>	Ross
Ho5847-2	Not issued	<i>Roses of Memory</i>	Ross
Ho5848	Not issued	<i>Messengers</i>	Brahe
Ho5848-2	Not issued	<i>Messengers</i>	Brahe
Ho5849	Not issued	<i>Bridal Dawn</i> (No.2 from <i>Highways and Holidays</i> )	Easthope Martin
Ho5849-2	Not issued	<i>Bridal Dawn</i> (No.2 from <i>Highways and Holidays</i> )	Easthope Martin

all w. orchestra cond. George W. Byng

The 10" suffix letters 'ae' were not given in the recording ledgers

**The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 9th September 1920:**

Ho4530	Not issued	<i>Flower of Sicily</i>	Oliver
Ho4530-2	Not issued	<i>Flower of Sicily</i>	Oliver
		both w. orchestra cond. George W. Byng	

The 12" suffix letters 'af' were not given in the recording ledgers

**The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 5th April 1921:**

Bb44-2	2-3559	B 1221	<i>Messengers</i>	May Brahe
Bb46-2	2-3558	B 1221	<i>Flower of Sicily</i>	Herbert Oliver
Bb47-1	2-3589	B 1248	<i>Bridal Dawn</i> (No.2 from <i>Highways and Holidays</i> )	Easthope Martin
			all w. orchestra cond. George W. Byng	

**The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 12th April 1921:**

Bb62-1	Not issued	<i>Yonder</i>	Herbert Oliver
Bb62-2	Not issued	<i>Yonder</i>	Herbert Oliver
Bb63-1	Not issued	<i>One Little Hour</i>	Evelyn Sharpe
Bb63-2	Not issued	<i>One Little Hour</i>	Evelyn Sharpe
Cc61-1	Not issued	<i>Onaway, Awake Beloved</i> (from <i>Hiawatha's Wedding Feast</i> )	Coleridge-Taylor
Cc61-2	Not issued	<i>Onaway, Awake Beloved</i> (from <i>Hiawatha's Wedding Feast</i> )	Coleridge-Taylor
		all w. orchestra cond. George W. Byng	

**The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 23rd September 1921:**

Bb496-1	2-3604	B 1279	<i>The Call</i>	Herbert Oliver
Bb496-2	Not issued		<i>The Call</i>	Herbert Oliver
Bb497-1	2-3603	B 1279	<i>The Street of Quiet Windows</i>	H. Baynton Power
Cc61-3	Not issued		<i>Onaway, Awake Beloved</i> (from <i>Hiawatha's Wedding Feast</i> )	Coleridge-Taylor
Cc61-4	Not issued		<i>Onaway, Awake Beloved</i> (from <i>Hiawatha's Wedding Feast</i> )	Coleridge-Taylor
			all w. orchestra cond. George W. Byng	

**The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 1st November 1921:**

Bb614-2	Not issued	<i>Caprice</i>	Felix White
Bb614-2	Not issued	<i>Caprice</i>	Felix White
Bb616-1	Not issued	<i>You will be mine</i>	Alfred Harris
Bb616-2	Not issued	<i>You will be mine</i>	Alfred Harris
Cc615-1	Not issued	<i>The Victor</i>	H. S. Burleigh
Cc615-2	Not issued	<i>The Victor</i>	H. S. Burleigh
		all w. orchestra cond. George W. Byng	

# THE ACOUSTICAL RECORDER FOR LATERAL CUT RECORDS - THE MISSING LINK?

## by Rolf Rekdal

In all the books regarding gramophones and phonographs, the acoustical recorder for lateral-cut gramophone records is almost never shown, except the familiar photograph of the Gramophone Company's recording machine, which appears in several publications such as Benet Bergonzi's *Old Gramophones* (page 18). Unfortunately full details cannot be seen here. After so many years since the end of the acoustical era the important link between the wax disc and the performing artists is almost lost. When I contacted several of the museums in Europe and overseas, none had such a device in their collections, not even a drawing or photograph of an acoustical cutting head was available. The recorder for cylinder machines is more familiar to collectors.

Emile Berliner in his patent dated February 19th 1895 also included the recorder in his patent drawing as shown in fig. 1 and 2. As time and development went on, more sophisticated cutting-heads appeared. From the early years of this century the recorder's

diaphragm was made of glass and many recording companies continued to use this type of diaphragm until the end of the acoustic era.

The exact construction of the acoustic recorder for gramophone records was not disclosed by any of the companies, but two early British patents may be taken as illustrative for laterally recorded disc cutting-heads. These are 659-01 and 627-01, as shown in fig. 3 and 4.

A letter from T. A. Edison to Henry Ford's secretary, dated October 17th 1925, illustrates the secrecy pervading the recording industry: "For twenty years I have spent an enormous amount of money and time experimenting personally on getting high recording quality. I have three confidential men who have worked with me, and I have made a trade secret of all the numerous items that made up the highly intangible things that produced the quality. A large part of the various small but essential items of apparatus is kept in a safe. No one but

Fig. 1

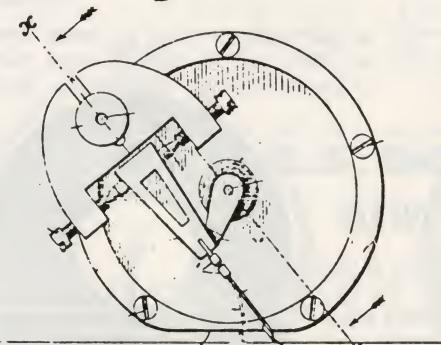
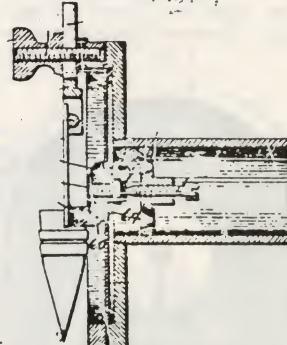
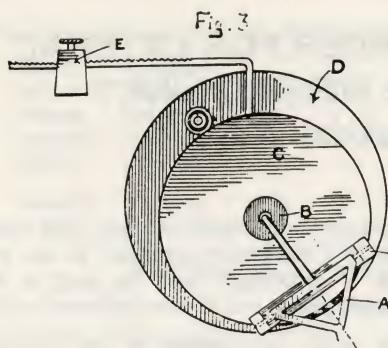


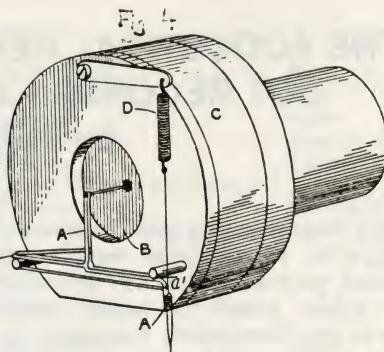
Fig. 2





RECORDING SOUND-BOX.

A. Stylus.      a. Stylus bearings.  
 C. Diaphragm holder.      D. Flange of Sound Tube.  
 E. Counter-weight.



RECORDING SOUND-BOX.

A. Stylus.      a. Stylus bearings.  
 B. Diaphragm.      C. Diaphragm holder.  
 D. Tension spring.

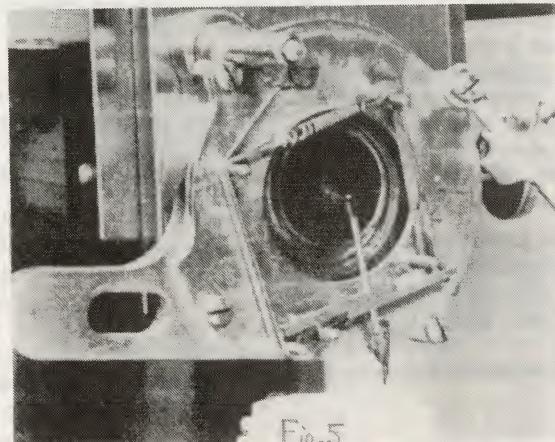


Fig. 5

1911

R. I. P.

1926

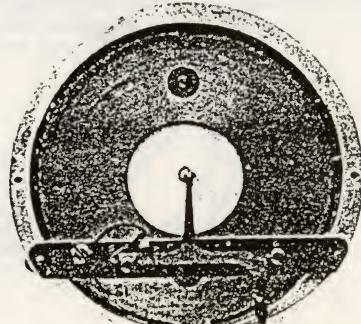
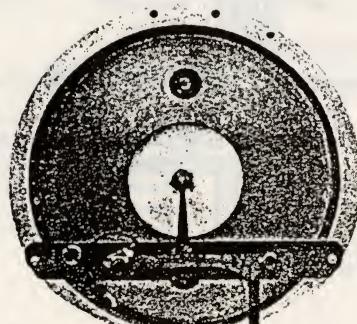


Fig. 6

TWO OLD AND FAITHFUL SERVANTS.

these confidential men and myself use these attachments, and no one is admitted to the inner recording room where they could examine the accessories." Edison continues in the same letter: "I could patent the details, but that would be of no use as my competitors would fight me for years as they did on the moving pictures." (*Edison Blue Amberol Recording Vol. II*, by Ronald Dethlefson)

It would seem that some kind of tension adjusting device for the recording diaphragm was used for the various types of recording that took place. In fig. 5, the acoustic recorder of the only surviving recording machine of The Gramophone Co. Ltd., shows a cord and a coiled-spring tensioning device.

This provided a means of tuning and adjusting the resonances of the acoustic recorder to fine limits. This type of machine was used between 1910 and 1924 by the Gramophone Co. Ltd. The traversing mechanism could be adjusted to give any of four spiralling pitches: 72, 83, 96 and 103 turns/radial inch (*Recorded Sound*, Summer 1962). A different way of adjusting the tension of the diaphragm was used by the Columbia Graphophone Co. Ltd between 1911 and 1926 as shown in fig. 6. The details are not clearly visible in the photograph but the method of adjustment of the tension is similar for both the 1911 and the 1926 recorder.

It is remarkable how much progress can be discerned when records of, say, 1905 are compared with records of 1925, some of

which are not inferior to some early electric recordings. The artists had to use their energy; an announcement in *The Talking Machine News* of June 1906 read: "The artists of the Berlin Royal Opera House have been forbidden on pain of dismissal to make records. The reason for the prohibitions is that they often announce their inability to sing their parts, thus causing great inconvenience to the management owing to their indisposition, which is frequently produced by singing too much into the machines referred to." (*Recorded Sound*, July 1962).

I'm grateful to senior archive assistant Suzanne Lewis of EMI Music Ltd.'s Archive, Hayes, Middlesex, U. K., and curator E. A. DeCoste, the National Museum of Science and Technology, Ottawa, Canada, for supplying me with most of the information given here.

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## C.L.P.G.S. BOOKLIST

### NEW!

Catalogue No. BD 32

*The Edison Cylinder Phonograph Companion* by George Frow.

This sells at £30 plus postage and packing.

This book will be reviewed for *Hillandale News* by Peter Martland.

# THE BRITISH RECORD INDUSTRY DURING THE REIGN OF KING EDWARD VII: 1901 - 1910

## by Frank Andrews

### Part 6

An economic recession, which began in 1907 and did not show any signs of recovery until 1909, did not help new businesses to establish themselves in the face of extant competition.

#### 1908 - With Discs Ascendant

The leading names in the cylinder trade in 1908 were Clarion, Columbia, Edison, Edison-Bell and Sterling. However Sterling sales were diminishing in the face of the 9d. brands on the market. In April their Sterling and Hunter Ltd. sales agency was moved from the manufacturers the Russell Hunting Record Co. because that firm was about to put itself into voluntary liquidation. That happened in May 1908. It put out its last list of records in June 1908. That was the last of the Sterlings for the year, although the extant stock was bought from the liquidator by a couple of London dealers. Subsequently the records became available at knock-down prices. At the start of the new 1908-1909 season in September, some of the titles, 160 in total, became available as Pathé discs. Pathé had either transcribed from mint cylinders, or had purchased some master moulds from the liquidator and processed the recordings therefrom to wax disc masters.

The abandoned Pathé cylinders in the old British catalogues were still available from A. W. Gamage Co.'s stores in Holborn. Gamages, after acquiring Pathé's stocks in 1906, sold them at very low prices.

For the new 1908-1909 season, Columbia introduced its new line called *The Blue Ribbon Records* of 4½" length and selling

for 1s. However the most important innovation of the year, introduced in April 1908, was the *AMBEROL* gold moulded wax cylinder records from Edison's National Phonograph Co. Ltd.

The new Edison cylinders were made at its works near Willesden Junction, London N.W. They were provided with a groove of 200 threads to the inch, twice the number of the *Edison Standard* record. The Amberola cylinders, which rotated at the same speed, gave twice the playing time which often amounted to four minutes plus. Thus the Amberola cylinder matched the playing time of one face of a 12" disc. At that time there was no Edison Phonograph manufactured designed to play the new type cylinders, but adaptors were made available. These were widely advertised, and allowed the existing Edison models to play the *Amberols* successfully, although new reproducers with suitable styli were also a requirement.

#### 1908 - The Expanding Disc Market - The British Fight Back

At the beginning of the year, the Disc Record Co. Ltd. of Stockport were still manufacturing records for the U.K. and Indian markets. The source of these records continued to be its Nicole Record Company's masters which had been recorded by that now defunct company company in London and India. Most were "stencilled" discs.

Fonotipia Ltd., with its contract with The Crystaleate Manufacturing Co. in Kent, had some of its Odeon and Fonotipia discs



Edison Bell Phona-Disc

pressed in England. Many of the Odeon masters were British recorded. In addition a tiny proportion of Fonotipias were also recorded at the Hamsell Street Studios with an extremely small few Fonotipias also recorded at the Hamsell Street Studios.

At the beginning of 1908 *Neophone Disc Phonograph Records - System White* were being made at Worship Street, off City Road. However the proprietors, the General Phonograph Co. Ltd., went into voluntary liquidation on April 13th 1908 and the Neophone discs disappeared for ever.

The only other disc being pressed in England at this time were the *Columbia Record* (12") and the *Columbia Double-Face Record* (10") and the *Single-Face Records* as alternative choices. A significant proportion of the masters continued to be of American origin, although a few arrived from continental Europe.

At the start of 1908 that was the extent of disc manufacturing in England.

German manufactured records on the British market came in three sizes. The firms concerned were *Beka Records*, plus *Era* discs, *Favorite*, *Globos/Globophon* (with a possible stencilled disc in *Festival*), *Homophone*, *Lyrophon*, *Mellograph* and, *Fonotipia* Ltd. with *Fonotipia* and *Odeon* records, and The Gramophone Co. Ltd. and its subsidiary The British Zonophone Co. Ltd. with their *Gramophone* and *Zonophone* records.

From America, imports of *Imperial Records* continued as did the *Star* records of *Hawthorne* and *Sheble*. However they appear to have become unavailable after the General Phonograph Co. Ltd. went into liquidation. *Star* machines continued to be available from the London agents, **Willibald, Tweer and Co.** of Tabernacle Street, E.C. and in September, from Scotland where **Larg and Son** (the agents for the German made *Excelsior* machines) were also appointed agents for the *Star* machines. With the success of the *Victor Talking Machine Co.*

in the U.S. Courts restraining Hawthorne and Sheble from carrying on with its Star products the company went into liquidation on July 11th 1909. Macey's Stores in the U.S.A. bought up the record stock. The liquidator's stock of Star machines, being infringeing articles in the U.S.A., came to Britain. They were advertised in April 1910 by **The Star Manufacturing Co.** at 15, City Road, London E.C..

Pathé discs continued to arrive in England from Pathé's factory in Belgium.

In April 1908 there occurred the first innovation in the British disc market. This was the introduction of the Odeon Records pressed as single-side recorded. This development was a consequence of the agents Sterling and Hunting Ltd. breaking with the Russell Hunting Record Co. Ltd. which was going into liquidation. The new Odeon discs were at 3s and the double-sided stocks were reduced from 5s to 3s. 6d. Odeon's June list was the last to be published. In July 1908 it was announced that Barnett Samuel and Sons Ltd. had taken over the Fonotipia Ltd. agency for the Odeon and Fonotipia discs. At the same time a third and cheaper line of Fonotipias, the *Jumbo Record*, was introduced. A small introductory Jumbo record was released in August and the records put on sale in September for the new 1908-1909 season. The Jumbo record (named after the large popular elephant in the London Zoological Gardens, whose presence there had brought a much needed increase in finances to the zoo) was a product of the **Jumbo Record Fabrik G.m.b.H.** a subsidiary company of the International Talking Machine Co. m.b.H. of Berlin. Founded in Frankfurt-am-Oder, with offices in Berlin, Jumbo records entered the German market in February 1908. The Jumbo catalogue already had an international repertoire before being augmented with London recordings. The discs were pressed both in Berlin and at the Crystalate Works in Kent. The fundamental proprietor of the business was Fonotipia Ltd. of London.

[*Jumbo Record No.94* was played at Neasden, Fred Vernon (Will Terry) singing *In the Twi-Twi-Twilight*.]

On 15th May 1908 an all-British recorded and manufactured disc was placed on the market. Of 10½" diameter and recorded both sides it was called the *Bell Disc - Genuine Edison Bell Record*. The trade term for this record was *Discaphone* to match the machine line of the same name which the **Edison Bell Consolidated Phonograph Co. Ltd.** had adopted to advertise its various models in contrast to its phonographs. These discs sold for 2s. 6d. each and were recorded with the lateral (Berliner) cut - a new departure for Edison Bell. This was the first of what should have been three new types of disc to be put out by Edison Bell. In August 1908 the 8½" diameter double-side recorded discs were announced. Made with a hill-and-dale (phonograph) cut, they were to be styled *Genuine Edison Bell Phona-Disc*. The small paper label had with titles and artists' names engraved in the surround filled with a pigment. Priced at 1s. 6d., they did not make their appearance until November. The third type proposed seems never to have put in an appearance at all. It was to have been "another double-sided Marvel" (to quote Edison Bell) and was to sell for 4s. Its forecast size varied between 11" and 12" and was to have been hill-and-dale (phonograph) cut recorded. Perhaps Edison Bell felt that with a number of Neophone machines in potential customers' hands, and the Pathé disc machines still on the market, that two brands of phono-cut discs would sell well.

[Bell Disc 207 *Estudiantina - Waltz* played by Alexander Prince - concertina and *The Morning, Noon and Night Overture* played by the Royal Military Band were demonstrated, the latter obviously transfers from Edison Bell cylinders as both part 1 and 2 had announcements on the Phona-Disc.]

In June 1908, The Gramophone Co. Ltd. introduced its first British double-side recorded disc. It had already done so in continental Europe. The new disc was of 10" size only and was appropriately called *Twin Double Sided Disc Record* and sold for 2s. 6d. A sub-division of the Gramophone Co. Ltd.'s headquarters staff was formed to control the new label and named the **Twin Record Company** which had its own office and a general manager. Later the company was registered as private joint stock company, with the Gramophone Company Ltd. as its sole stockholder. The first Twin discs were pressed in Hanover.

[If I could plant a tiny seed of love sung by Frank Williams, who was actually Stanley Kirkby, was demonstrated on The Twin 90]

In July 1908, The Gramophone Co. Ltd.'s new record factory at Hayes, Middlesex came on stream, bringing the total of pressing factories in England to four.

Another disc which must be mentioned is the *Elephone Record*. This record was a product of the reconstituted **Universal Talking Machine Co. Ltd.** of 1907. As the 1908 company, it registered the label as a trade mark in June, but it is not certain when the *Elephone Records* were first sold. Recording rooms were established in Scutton Street with head office in Fenchurch Avenue, both in the City. British artists were recorded, it is thought by the Lyrophon Company's experts, because it was they who recorded the French artists appearing on the label. There were also German artists, but it is quite likely that the *Elephone Records* had access to existing masters rather than having especially recorded foreign artists. The Universal company was reported to have failed through the non-success of its Indian recording activities. The business lasted only thirteen months before being petitioned into liquidation. *Elephone Records* were 10" double-side recorded.

Another all-British recorded and manufactured record of both 10" and 12" diameter, introduced in June 1908, was the *Russell Double-Sided Record*. This record appeared five months after the Russell cylinders had their last issues. Made by a reconstructed business **F. M. Russell and Co. Ltd.** at the Junction Works, Willesden, London N.W.10 only 18 10" discs at 3s. 6d. and 15 12" discs at 5s. were released. The last issues were made in September 1908. All were original recordings and included Professor Herr Viggo Kihl, the pianist on the Russell cylinders, who had six sides amongst the discs.

In September 1908 *The Clarion Record* of 10" size, but recorded with a vertical (phonograph) cut was put on sale. Another all-British recorded and manufactured disc, they were the product of **The Premier Manufacturing Co. Ltd.**, (the makers of the Clarion cylinder record) at their factory at The Point, Wandsworth, where disc record presses had been installed. The discs sold for 2s. 6d. but the output was limited. Up to December 1909 only 40 or so discs were released. At the year's end the company was already in the hands of a receiver.

According to America's *Talking Machine World* of August 1908 a disc called the Eden was soon to be placed on the English market. By the time it arrived in September it had taken the name of *The Royal Record*. A 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ " disc (27cm.) it was to be put on sale on the 15th at 2s. 6d. The recorders and manufacturers were a French firm - **International Phonic Company** - which had been founded in December 1907. Fifty titles had already been recorded for the first list, including an up-to-date English repertoire. The sole rights in the discs lay with **The City Manufacturing Co.**, which was the trading name of Abraham Lyon (who also traded as **A. Lyon and Co.**, **The Lyraphone Talking Machine Co.** and the **City Talking Machine Co.**). After the first list in September there were no more lists



Russell Double-sided Record

published. As Abraham Lyon was in the throes of bankruptcy in December 1908 it is perhaps not surprising that nothing further is known about the discs. Royal records of English manufacture, pressed by the Disc Record Co. Ltd. of Stockport from Nicole masters, are known but it is not possible to say when they were on sale, nor for how long. As some examples are known with the "Made in London, England" on the labels this suggests they could have begun with the Nicole Record Co. itself. The Stockport pressings carried "British Manufacture" on the labels.

A new type of Zonophone Record was introduced, also in September. This was the white and green labelled *Zonophone Grand Record*. These records were mainly devoted to operatic arias and choruses (generally in English) together with some instrumentalists from the concert platform world. During the ensuing year, the label was altered, firstly to *Zonophone Grand Opera*

and lastly to *Zonophone Grand Opera Record*. They were sold for the increased price of 3s. 6d. each although their catalogue numbers were in the same series as the standard *Zonophone Records* at 2s. 6d. each. All Zonophone Records were still single-sided recorded, including a few in the 7" size, the majority of which had been deleted from the catalogue although there had been a few new releases in the previous March. The standard Zonophone discs took a new label in 1908, the most distinctive feature being the circle and cross trade mark as an overprint on a much darker green label. The word Zonophone was placed within the cross both vertically and horizontally, sharing the letter P at the centre. The large trade mark was printed in a pale blue; on the new Zonophone Grands it was printed in a lime colour.

As vertical-cut records generally needed to be played over with a sapphire or diamond stylus, the term "Sapphire discs" was occa-

sionally used to describe them. Although Edison Bell had promised in August 1908 another "Marvel" in double-sided discs, as an 11" vertical cut disc, it never appeared. However, in October 1908, an 11" record vertical cut was put out called *The Sapphire Phono Disc*, priced at 4s. There were 20 discs in the first list, all of British artists and recordings, presumably taken by, or on behalf of **Lacroix and Co.** of Paris and Jewin St. London E.C. (the British agents). The records are known to have been in dealers hands in Manchester, Birmingham and London, but after November 1908, they were no longer mentioned in the trade journals. In that month the British agency changed to a **Mr Davies** of Victoria St., Westminster, London S.W.

The Lacroix and Co. business was also the British agent for the new 10 1/2" Phoebus Record lateral (needle) cut which sold for 3s. each and also introduced in October. An incomplete first list displayed 14 numbers with the highest at 21. Again all were British artists, and for those the *Talking Machine News* stated that Lacroix and Co. were responsible for the manufacture of the discs. As with the Sapphire Phono Discs, Lacroix gave up its agency in the Phoebus Record to Mr Davies of Victoria Street. The firm claimed the records were the "Loudest, Smoothest and Longest Playing Record Yet Produced". The discs were handled by the same dealers in Manchester, Birmingham and London. {If any member has an example of either of these discs I would like a description of the label and notice of any matrix numbers to be seen - Thank you, F. A.}

June 1908 had seen the first new *Polyphon Record* to arrive from Germany. These were the 10" lateral cut and priced at 2s. 6d. The first list did not arrive in the trade press until November. Polyphon were available from a **Mr J. A. Williams** at his London office for the **Polyphon-Musikwerke A.G.** the famous Wahren-Leipzig business which

produced disc type music-boxes under their name of Polyphons. Williams' office was at 92 Hatton Gardens, London E.C. where dealers were invited to pay a visit to examine samples of the discs and the Polyphon Gramophones. Alternatively, they could send in for a price list. The disc catalogue contained 250 "pieces" all of which would have been bands, opera airs or instrumentals. No British recordings had yet been taken; only in December 1908 was it announced that the company was preparing an English repertoire.

Polyphon Records had come onto the German market in May 1905 as unbreakable records. It is known that the Nicole Record Co. Ltd. undertook a contract order with Polyphon Musikwerke to coincide with the 1905 Leipzig Fair. 300 titles were in the first German catalogue.

In England, in November 1908, J. A. Williams described the new Polyphon discs (which were just as breakable as ordinary shellac records) as "The Connoisseur Record". Polyphon Records were obtainable from J. A. Williams up to June 1910.

[Polyphon Record 8882 - the *March Blaze Away* by Abe Holzmann, recorded by The English Polyphon Band was played at Neasden.]

In November 1908, two new British records were first advertised. Both were of the "stencilled" type and were almost certainly pressed by the Disc Record Co. Ltd. at Stockport. One was the *Whytsdale Record*, 10" double-sided pressed for **Messrs. Whyte, Risdale and Co.** for sale to the wholesale trade only from their premises in Houndsditch, Bishopgate, London E. As *The Record of the Future* the English repertoire discs were at 18s. 6d. per dozen; those records containing repertoires from the sub-continent of India, in Hindustani, Bengali, Tamil, Telgu, Sanskrit and Gujarati were priced higher than £1 per dozen. Those latter discs must have been pressed from

the Nicole Record Co. (India) Ltd.'s matrix stock held at Stockport. The Indian Nicole company had been in a bad way for some time. It is not known for how long the Whytsdale Records were available, or what dealers priced them at, having paid 1s. 6d. and 1s. 8d. each respectively. The second "stencilled" disc was the *Millophone Record*, pressed for **H. Mills** who had been trading from 49, Bishopsgate Within, London E.C. since 1903. His Millophone Records of 10" size must have been on sale for some time previous to November 1908. The Millophone advertisement concerning an offer of 5,000 records practically given away, mentions his discs as the famous Millophone - hardly the words to introduce a new label, yet a news item described them as a new record! A hand list issued contained 139 discs but only two, numbers 1001 and 1008, have been logged. It is from those that there is an indication that Nicole Records were the source.

{Any member with a physical example, please write to me. Please note: do not be confused with the green and gold *Millophone New Record* of 10½" diameter and the Bell Disc stencilled records.}

The Millophones were priced at 2s. 3d. The "Give-Away" was a free Millophone if two were purchased and one worn or cracked disc of any make sent in with the order for two. That was an introductory offer which was held for a brief period only. The last advertisement mentioning those records came in December 1908.

And it was in December 1908 that Columbia Phonograph Co. Gen'l. coupled up a new line of discs, introduced in August, labelled *Disco Columbia Serie Celebrità*. These records were a product of the Milan branch of Columbia. As single-sided discs selling at 6s. each, there were 27 titles in the August list (the only list, with 24 of the titles by opera singers recorded in the U.S.A. and

three by Italian opera singers recorded in Milan). As double-sided *Celebrità*, four months later, they were priced at 6s. 6d. but with seven sides not coupled. They were all 12" discs.

By the end of 1908 Columbia's business was at a low ebb and it was only too pleased to co-operate with Louis Sterling when he founded **The Rena Manufacturing Co. Ltd.** In November 1908, after having left the Sterling and Hunting Ltd. and the Russell, Hunting Record Co. businesses earlier in the year, he had in October already applied for Rena as his trade mark. His co-director in the new company was Norbert D. Rodkinson, who had recently lost his position as manager of the German and Russian business of the Gramophone Co. Ltd. Rodkinson, in Berlin, by November had formed a new combine by bringing together the Bergmann Electrizitätsfirma with Max Böhme and Co. of Dippoldiswalde, near Dresden, well-known cabinet makers to the talking machine industry. The new combination was called **Sächsische Holzwarenfabrik, Max Böhme and Co.** which was to make the motors and cabinets of the Rena and Sirena machines and the cabinets. Rodkinson was appointed managing director of the new venture.

The contract to make the *Rena Double Face Records* of 10" size was probably entered into with Columbia at the time the Rena trade mark was applied for, as the discs themselves were ready for the market in December 1908 with the slogan "Every One a Picked One". They were taken from the existing Columbia matrix stock at their Earlsfield factory, although the matrix numbers themselves were omitted from the labels and machined off the masters having Rena matrix stock numbers stamped on to distinguish between those in use for *Columbia Double Face Records* and the contracting company. It is my hypothesis that as the Rena matrix numbers were prefixed either with an "S" or an "R", these letters signify

that it was either Sterling or Rodkinson who "picked" that particular Columbia master for use as a Rena record.

Fifty records were in the December list, and the records sold for 2s. 6d. each, 6d. cheaper than their contemporary Columbia Double Face Records of similar repertoire. Compared to Columbia's sales the Rena records were a huge success under Sterling's controlling hand. Another British made record it drew on Columbia's American, British and Continental European recordings.

[A balalaika solo recording by a member of the Russian Balalaika Orchestra was played on *Rena Double Face Record 1220*, entitles *Down the Volga* - a selection of Russian traditional airs.]

During 1908 Pathé Frères, of London, were in the news quite often. A loud-sounding model of the Pathéphone was demonstrated to a packed house in the Royal Albert Hall on January 24th and during the proceedings the bugle that sounded the Charge for the Light Brigade was again heard sounding the charge, played by a veteran soldier from one of the boxes. The bugle had been loaned by a Councillor Maycock, who was the executor of the late owner of the instrument. The audience stood and cheered on the first playing of the charge, which had to be repeated.

The next month Pathé said they supplied special recordings for the Women's Suffragette Movement which had been recorded on the Pathéphone recording machine in the London studios by Mrs Billingham Greig, Mrs How-Martyn, Miss Grove, Mrs Despard and Mr W. T. Stead, the editor of *Review of Reviews*. Already in the hands of the Suffragettes, it was said that they would be made available to the public.

In July 1908, it was reported that J. Lewis Young had joined Pathé as a recording expert. He was followed in August by Russell Hunting as another recording expert, who by October 1908 was promoted to chief recording expert for Pathé's whole business. Hunting also took with him Lilian Bryant, a pianist and a later conductor of the Pathé Orchestra and William Ditcham, the well-known artist and another recording expert. In November 1908 Pathé introduced its 10" (25cm) discs at 2s. each.

In December 1908, the Edison Bell Company's Edisonia Works at Camberwell suffered a severe fire. This delayed the introduction of its newly announced Crystol cylinder record which was intended to challenge the Edison Amberol of four minutes playing time.

**To be continued**



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# MECHANICAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

THURSDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER 1995

*Closing date for entries is Monday July 17th 1995*

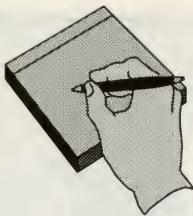
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# LETTERS



## World Records

Dear Chris,

For those members who have purchased the World Records and Vocalion Long Playing Records Catalogue, compiled by the late Edward Walker, Arthur Badrock and myself, here are two additional entries which have come to hand through member Roger Thorne:

VOCALION LONG PLAYING "W" Series

W 38

*Robert Carr (baritone) At Grendon Fair, Easter Flowers, Why Shouldn't I?* Speed D fast; 6mins. 30 secs.

*Here in the Quiet Hills, The Fishermen of England See, Love, I bring Thee Flowers.* Speed D, 7 mins. 15secs.

W 41

August 1925: Band of H. M. Welsh Guards cond. Andrew Harris

*Reminiscences of Tosti* (arr. J. Pougher) 8 mins. 25 secs.

*Songs of the Fair* (Easthope Martin) (probably includes: *Come to the Fair, Fairings, Jock the Fiddler, Langley Fair* and the *Ballad Singer*, 8 mins. 30 secs.

Yours sincerely,  
Frank Andrews, Neasden, London

## Music and Movement

Dear Chris,

Here is the authentic account of the incredible recording by the BBC referred to by your reader Mr M. P. Shaw in the April 1995 issue of *Hillendale News*.

The recording was of a broadcast in the series 'Music and Movement', which took place on the afternoon of Wednesday, September 6, 1950. The presenter was a Marjorie Eeles, and she relied on giving instructions

to listening children, illustrating them with short phrases on the piano. "I want you to pretend you've got some balls....I'm going to hide them....they may be high up (piano trill in the treble) or low down on the floor (bass rumble from the piano). Then I want you to dance about and play with your balls....". It went on like this for about ten minutes; the producer tried vainly to persuade Miss Eeles to change her script, but she would have none of it. Presumably the programme was recorded as a matter of course in case it was decided to repeat it, but as soon as he could, the engineer rushed across to the Gramophone Library where I was working, and played the newly-cut acetate to us. The fact that the whole exercise was delivered in a rather jolly-auntie sort of voice made it all the more hilarious.

The sequel was that when I was in New York in 1963, a jazz collector showed me a red translucent vinyl pressing done by RCA Victor, no less, consisting of this very broadcast. He was mystified as to what and who it was, for Miss Eeles was so very, very English. When I told him the whole story, he nearly had hysterics as we all did in the Library thirteen years before. This is as near the programme ever came to being issued commercially, but I believe a considerable number of illicit copies were made as acetates. Of Marjorie Eeles, I know nothing. How she came to present the programme, and what happened to her afterwards, I have never been able to find out.

My best, as ever,  
Brian Rust, Swanage, Dorset

## Corrigenda, Orchorsol & Military Bands

Dear Chris,

In the April 1995 issue of *Hillendale News* in Part 5 of my *British Industry History* on page 254, column 2, I have made the most inexcusable mistake about Melograph Records. I had written that the labels had stated "Made in Liverpool". Such is not the case: only "Liverpool" appears on some of the labels. I have one disc and five different transparencies of labels and none state "Made in Liverpool" - although previous commentators have made the error of saying they were "Made in Liverpool".

Another mistake occurs on page 258 where I have, inter alia, made January 7th 1900 as at "the turn of the new century" whereas there were another 51 weeks to follow before the new century began on January 1st 1901.

### Orchorsol

I don't know if this will be of any interest to Mark Gray, but Orchorsol was registered as a trade mark for gramophones in September 1922 to Mr Claude Moorhouse Stoney of 149 South Lambeth Road, London SW8. In January 1929 the mark passed to Orchorsol Gramophones Ltd. of 639 and 643 Salisbury House, London Wall, London E.C. I do not know how long the company was in existence.

### Military Bands

To John Ambler I forward the following observations regarding the early recordings of military bands:

According to *The Phonogram* published at 69 Fore Street, London E.C. "on Tuesday morning of May 2nd 1893 the Regimental Band played *The Cossack Patrol* before Their Royal Highnesses, Prince Adolphus, Princess May of Cambridge, The Duchess of Teck and the Officers of the 17th Lancers. This was recorded into an Edison Phonograph, belonging to J. Lewis Young's Edison Phonograph Company. This took place at Hounslow Barracks, Middlesex. Prince Adolphus was highly delighted with the reproduction."

Also in May, or early June, (two weeks before the June 1893 issue of *The Phonogram*

) The Queen's Park Military Band conducted by Sam Cope, the well-known brass band conductor and composer, played and recorded some selections and a *Barn Dance* for what was now "The Phonograph Offices" of 69 Fore Street. The recording engineer was Mr Graham Hope, and I take it the band was that which played in Queen's Park, Kilburn.

In the July 1893 issue, Arthur Charles Selling, The Phonograph Office's traveller, wrote from Italy that in Catania, at the Barracks he had recorded the 21st regimental band, which was about sixty strong. Three marches mentioned were the *21st Regimental March*, *Marcia Reale* and *Marcia Garibaldi* (Bellini). He had ten band titles in total. The Colonel of the regiment had given permission to record every morning if they wished.

The Royal Marines recording of September 1893 I know nothing about. The Phonograph Office had been infringing patents up to August 1893 and I know of no more editions of *The Phonogram* It is possible that The Royal Marines Band was recorded by staff of The Phonograph Office of Fore Street. J. Lewis Young is known to have been in America in November 1893.

On the other hand it is more likely that the band was recorded by the Edison Bell Phonograph Corporation Ltd. at Edison House, Northumberland Avenue, London, as that new company owned all the British phonograph patents, which it had purchased from the

Edison United Phonograph Company (formerly the Edison Phonograph Company of Edison House). In spite of what the Royal Marines journal *Globe and Laurel* states, Mr Edison did not have a phonograph establishment in London and had not done so since 1890, when the Edison United Phonograph Company took over at Northumberland Avenue.

Young at some point claims he recorded a section of H. M. Grenadier Guards Band in the early 1890s.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Andrews, Neasden, London

### Centre Hole Mystery (1)

Dear Mr Hamilton,

Grateful thanks to Mr Adamson for solving in issue No.203 the Great Centre Hole Mystery which has puzzled at least one member for over fifty years. I first noticed this curiously faceted orifice (which I wrongly assumed to be a wartime innovation) when trying to correct a 'swinger' by enlarging the centre hole. In many new (i.e. unplayed) records around this time the centre hole was rather ragged and I now suspect that this was not due to the inferior wartime shellac but to the use of dies where a polygonal pin imperfectly mated with a cylindrical socket. In any event I took the late Mr Percy Wilson's advice to clean up the hole using a small tapered reamer before playing a new record and in doing so probably removed all traces of EMI's meticulously engineered polygons!

Yours sincerely,

W. McKnight Toner, Bridge of Weir, Renfrewshire

### Centre Hole Mystery (2)

Dear Chris,

I was fascinated by the article by Peter Adamson in issue 203. I too noticed the polygonal holes used for E.M.I. pressings during the 1934/50 period, but I had forgotten all about the subject, for which my stroke must take the blame.

Now that I am feeling more like my old self again, I looked through some of my records of the period in question, and found that the use of polygonal centre holes was not confined to records made at Hayes. Almost the first record I examined was one of Arthur Askey's from the early years of the Second World war. The catalogue number is HMV BD 757, and the stamper is 'G'. The record was not made at Hayes, but at Dum Dum.

It appears, then, that the use of polygonal centre holes was not confined to Hayes.

Yours sincerely,  
Ken Loughland, Maidenhead, Berks.

### Centre Hole Mystery (3)

Dear Chris,

I was very interested in Peter Adamson's article *The Hole Story: or why Hayes went twelve-sided* in the April 1995 *Hillendale News*. Here, for the first time, this puzzle was fully investigated and researched, proving that the 12-sided hole really did have some effectiveness in overcoming slipping (in the early autochangers) rather than being merely, as I had previously assumed, a bit of a sales gimmick.

It also made me look through my ephemera drawer and I came up with a few items which may be of interest as a follow up to the article.

Firstly there is a letter dated 30th September 1936 to all Columbia dealers telling them of the new patent and stating that it would "give them something to talk about" and "would create a national sensation", hardly likely I would have thought. Also enclosed are copies of the two advertising blocks mentioned and the eye-catching 15" X 20" poster in red and black for window display.

These, amongst other bits of ephemera, came to me about 15 years ago when an old shop, which had been closed for many years, was being cleared.

It had belonged to a second-hand bookseller, who had been in business from the 1920s until sometime in the 1950s. He also dealt in records to some extent and so was on the mailing lists of all the companies then in operation - Columbia, Parlophone, Regal Zonophone (though not HMV) and the Decca group as well.

However the monthly envelopes seem rarely to have been opened and so a large accumulation of monthly supplements, posters and other promotional material had built up over the years and indeed well into the LP era. Arriving late on the scene, I obtained only a small fraction of what must have been present, but I did find some interesting printed material.

Gramophone and record ephemera is rather a neglected side of our hobby I feel, but it can make an interesting study if you can find it.

Yours sincerely,  
Leslie Gage, Edinburgh

{Many thanks, Leslie, for the copies of the dealer's letter and advertising blocks. Unfortunately the coloured poster won't reproduce clearly enough for publication. I agree about your comments on ephemera connected with our hobby and hope that more readers will follow your example and share their ephemeral treasures with the rest of us. Ed.}

## Forthcoming Meetings in London

London Meetings are held at the National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, South Kensington, on the third Thursday evening of the month promptly at **6.45pm** (unless stated otherwise). Members' attention is drawn to the London Meetings Notice on page 100 of issue 188 (October 1992).

<b>June 15th</b>	<i>The Blues and the Gray</i> presented by George Frow and Dominic Combe. A cylinder programme using a machine from Dominic's collection.
<b>July 20th</b>	<i>A Recorded Dinner, Cooked and Served</i> by Tom Little. On the menu: Mozart Paté, Champagne and, of course, Cigarettes by Abdullah.
<b>August 17th</b>	Timothy Massey will be commemorating the life of John McCormack, who died fifty years ago.
<b>September 21st</b>	Nigel Douglas the well-known singer and broadcaster will be talking about and giving illustrations from his books and CDs entitled <i>Legendary Singers</i> .
<b>October 19th</b>	<i>Live or Wire</i> - George Woolford compares the mechanical and electric recordings of selected artists.

TELEPHONES,  
CLERKENWELL 7520 (16 LINES.)

TELEGRAMS  
TALKINGDOM, TELEX, LONDON.

# COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE COMPANY, LTD.

COLUMBIA GRAFONOLAS. COLUMBIA NEW PROCESS RECORDS. COLUMBIA RADIO. COLUMBIA RADIO-GRAPHOPHONES

DIRECTORS:  
THE Rt.HON.LORD MARKS.  
ALFRED CLARK (U.S.A. ORIGIN)  
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CABLES FIBRILLAGE, LONDON  
CODES, WESTERN UNION (LETTER EDITION)  
LICENSERS, BENTLEY'S, ABC (STANDARD &  
PRIVATE CODE)

REGISTERED OFFICES,  
COLUMBIA HOUSE,  
98 to 108, CLERKENWELL ROAD,  
LONDON, E.C.1.

IN YOUR REPLY PLEASE QUOTE

## RECORD-SLIPPING OVERCOME—IMPORTANT NEW PATENT INCORPORATED IN COLUMBIA RECORDS

Dear Sir,

September 30th, 1936

We have a new feature in Columbia records that will give you something to talk about and create a national sensation.

For some months the Columbia records have been made with a polygonal centre-hole (i.e. having flat sides, instead of being circular) and this patent means

### RECORD-SLIPPING OVERCOME

We attach such importance to it that we are devoting the front page of the Columbia October supplement to an enlarged diagram, and would ask you to read the story at the top of page 2 inside.

We have also issued a special coloured poster and specially request that you give this a prominent position in your window.

We have every reason to believe that this new invention will largely increase Columbia record sales and confidently look for your co-operation to bring this about.

Talk about it. Show your customers the records. Display the poster. Mail out the Supplements. Advertise the new patent.★

Help us to use this to create another big season's boom in Columbia records.

Don't you think it's a good idea?

Yours very truly,

COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE COMPANY LTD.

Record Sales

★Special Advertising Blocks are shown in the enclosed sheet.

# BLOCKS FOR DEALERS' OCT. ADVERTISING

## RECORD SENSATION FROM COLUMBIA

LOOK at the front of the Columbia October Supplement. It introduces a new feature by which RECORD-SLIPPING IS OVERCOME. It will set everybody talking, and the already Big Sales of Columbia records will be BIGGER STILL. Be among the first to get the benefit of this by advertising it in your local paper. Two Special Designs are included in this sheet for this purpose. Make October by this means a RECORD MONTH TO REMEMBER.

ORDER BY NUMBER ONLY—Address: COLUMBIA ADVTG. DEPT., 98-108, Clerkenwell Road, London, E.C.I.

## SLIPPING OF RECORDS OVERCOME

BY THE NEW PATENT POLYGONAL (12-SIDED) CENTRE HOLE . . . . .

## A NEW SAFEGUARD AGAINST VARIATION IN PITCH OR TONE

*The Diagram above shows the flat sides of the Centre Hole of Columbia Records.*



Empty—Saddles (B.B.C. Dance Orchestra)	Record FB1478
Ditto (Les Allen) ...	Record FB1495
Is It True what They Say about Dixie ? (Scott Wood and His Six Swingers) ...	Record FB1462
It's a Sin to Tell a Lie (Turner Layton) ...	Record FB1496
On the Beach at Ball-Ball (Turner Layton) ...	Record FB1496
Your Heart and Mine (Turner Layton) ...	Record FB1501
Ditto (Mantovani and His Tipica Orchestra) ...	Record FB1481
You Can't Pull the Wool Over My Eyes (Carroll Gibbons and Savoy Hotel Orpheans) ...	Record FB1459
Shoe Shine Boy (Les Allen) ...	Record FB1463
	Record FB1495

INSERT YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS HERE

INSERT YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS HERE

INSERT YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS HERE

IMPORTANT—Dealers can themselves change any Records in these Advertisements to suit their own requirements, when they receive the Blocks. **MORE BLOCKS ON NEXT PAGE.**

17-38 C.F.

BLOCK No. 1114

BLOCK No. 1113

# COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE COMPANY LTD.

COLUMBIA GRAFONOLAS. COLUMBIA NEW PROCESS RECORDS. COLUMBIA RADIO. COLUMBIA RADIO-GRAPHOPHONES.

DIRECTORS:  
THE RT.HON.LORD MARKS.  
ALFRED CLARK (U.S.A. ORIGIN).  
WILLIAM FORSE.  
J. G. H. HILL.  
H.L.H. HILL.  
SIR ARTHUR CORNELIUS ROBERTS, K.B.E.  
EDWARD DE STEIN.  
LOUIS STERLING (U.S.A. ORIGIN).



CABLES: FIBRILLO SE, LONDON.  
CODES: WESTERN UNION (LETTER EDITION).  
LIEBERS, BENTLEY'S, A.B.C. (STANDARD EDITION).  
PRIVATE CODE.

REGISTERED OFFICES.  
COLUMBIA HOUSE,  
98 to 108, CLERKENWELL ROAD,  
LONDON, E.C.1.

IN YOUR REPLY PLEASE QUOTE 3899-M

October 13th, 1936.

Dear Sirs,

### "SLIPPING OVERCOME"

You will like to know that the new Columbia slogan of "SLIPPING OVERCOME" and its important bearing on ensuring perfect Tone, has had the expected effect on Columbia record sales, and we are taking care that this shall become more widely known to get the fullest benefit of this important invention. We shall feature it again in November lists.

### COLUMBIA 1/6 SERIES

Naturally, it is the Columbia 1/6 Variety Records that have shown the biggest increase in sales, and to still further develop this series we have produced a novel record window-bill carrying facsimile signatures of the stars on these 1/6 records.

We enclose copies of the small size of this novel bill, which is certain to attract close attention in your window. If you require a larger size, we have it as 20-inch circle, and will be glad to send this on application.

### SUPPLEMENTARY CATALOGUE

Many dealers tell us that the enclosed Supplementary Catalogue of Columbia records is proving very helpful in selling extra records. As it contains all issues from Jan. 1935 to August 1936, it enables dealers to concentrate on the newest records. Excellent business has been done by mailing this to customers and if you require a quantity for this purpose please ask for supplies.

Columbia records are going so well that we are anxious that every dealer should make an effort to get increased business and in this we will be glad to co-operate.

Yours very truly,  
COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE COMPANY LTD.

*Aug 8. 1936*  
RECORD SALES

P.S. We suggest you order from your Factor the records on the "Special New Release" bill enclosed. All these are selling big.

# MARIE de RESKE'S FONOTIPIA

## by George Taylor

I have just achieved one of my gramophone ambitions: I have heard Marie de Reske sing.

The story of how the famous tenor Jean de Reske recorded for Fonotipia in Paris in 1905 is well known, and the fact that he was dissatisfied with the test pressings of his records and ordered them to be destroyed is one of the great tragedies of gramophone history.

Less well known is the story of the recording endeavours of Jean's wife, Marie. Though Marie was an amateur singer, she was quite used to performing to a critical audience. She recorded at least four titles for Fonotipia in Paris,<sup>1</sup> and apparently the records sounded well - so well, in fact, that Jean, contrasting Marie's records with his own, ordered them to be destroyed too. Maybe there were reasons other than envy on Jean's part - but whatever, the recording engineer could not bear to break all Marie's tests. He kept back copy number eleven of the Rossignol song by Gounod, which was evidently particularly fine. This test pressing is in the posession of Dr Harold Wayne and is transcribed on Symposium CD 1172, Vol

21 of the publication of Dr Wayne's monumental collection.<sup>2</sup> Though the record was never put on sale, it bears the catalogue number 39104 (together with matrix number xph 567 and test number 11). Marie made no other records.

In my view, the Paris Fonotipias are not up to the technical standards of the Milan product - but the Marie de Reske record is superb. Marie had a rich contralto voice which evidently recorded very well. Jean himself accompanies on the piano quite adequately, in contrast with what I reported earlier,<sup>1</sup> and also in contrast with many of the other Paris Fonotipias, the piano has recorded realistically.

If you like good singing, there are some other fine things on this CD - but the Marie de Reske track is worth the whole price of the CD.

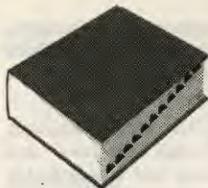
### References

- 1) G. W. Taylor, *The Recorded Legacy of Jean de Reske*, *Record Collector* 33 pp 22-25 (1988)
- 2) Symposium CD 1172, *The Paris Fonotipias, The Harold Wayne Collection* Vol. 21

### C.L.P.G.S. BOOKLIST

Cat.No. BD 01 Hayes on Record - The Story of the manufacture of records at HMV. Over 200 pages of nostalgia. A great value paperback by Peter Hall and Colin Brown. **2nd Edition** now in stock. **Price £8** plus postage.

## REVIEW



### More Legendary Voices by Nigel Douglas

### More Legendary Voices, Nimbus CD

A new book and a new CD to review this time. Each stands on its own, but together each adds greatly to the enjoyment of the other. The book is *More Legendary Voices* by Nigel Douglas and the CD is, believe it or not, *More Legendary Voices* produced by Nimbus. You can read the book, or you can listen to the record, but together they fit like a jigsaw.

First the book. If you liked the style and format of Nigel Douglas's original book *Legendary Voices*, then this second volume will not disappoint. Nigel Douglas is of course one of the country's most eminent singers. His name may be not as familiar to the general public as the operatic superstars, but for many years past he has been busy in opera houses across the world. Nigel Douglas heard a number of his *More Legendary Voices* on stage and even studied under one of those featured in his first book: the English tenor Alfred Piccaver.

Douglas explains, in the foreword to his book, that when he started to write the original *Legendary Voices* his list ran to 26 names. Fourteen appeared in the first volume: the remaining 12 are in this book under review. The latest book includes such names from the past as Titta Ruffo and Feodor Chaliapin. Anyone who heard these artists in their prime would now be very elderly. But we come more up to date, with singers who were still active after the war: Kathleen Ferrier, Gigli and Tauber and most recent of all, Maria Callas.

In his book Douglas does not try to give a potted biography: in many cases the subjects are already more than adequately catered for in other volumes. Instead he successfully manages to convey by anecdote, from personal

experience and by relating the experiences of others, something of the characters of the singers. There are, naturally, instances where recourse is made to quotations from published works, but this is done carefully and does not upset the balance.

It is worth remembering throughout this book that Nigel Douglas is a singer. It means not only that he understands the people about whom he writes, but through his teacher, Piccaver, and other musical contacts over the past 40 years, he has connections with most of the great names in opera over the last century. Thus Douglas can recommend with authority the various recordings of these *More Legendary Voices* which are now being issued on CD by various companies.

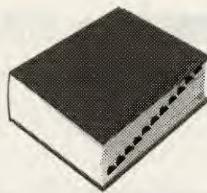
Which brings me to the Nimbus CD which was issued in conjunction with Nigel Douglas's book. These are all original Nimbus re-recordings using the Ambisonic system and many of them are already available on other Nimbus CDs in their *Prima Voce* series. It has to be said that there are no super rarities among the tracks, and a number of the originals are in even modest record collections like mine. But a number of the tracks have been transferred from quiet Victor pressings: how nice to hear familiar McCormack and Chaliapin recordings without the fizz and crackle of the 1920s HMV surfaces!

So then, a record and a book, either of which would make a worthy addition to the shelves of any CLPGS member. But together, they made up a complementary package on some of the best singers of this century.

The details again: the book is *More Legendary Voices* by Nigel Douglas, published by André Deutsch at £20; and the CD, number **Nimbus NI 7664**, has the same title, and is from Nimbus at £9.99.

**Colin Johnson**

## REVIEWS



### **Discographie der deutschen Tanzmusik, Band 4, by Rainer E. Lotz**

This is his fourth volume of German Dance Music recordings on discs, which form part of the second series of the German National Discographies (Deutsche National-Discographie).

As with the earlier three volumes, the bands included in this present volume have been arranged in alphabetical order, here beginning with Edgar Adeler and the last having entries by Willi Steh. After the "Acknowledgements" comes two-and-a-half pages of the names of the bands and orchestras included in all four volumes with appropriate "first page" references and volume number. The bands here are all in strict alphabetical order.

Of interest to enthusiasts of dance music the artists involved, are many entries which show British based companies' catalogue numbers and artists known on British lists who recorded with German ensembles. For instance under Edgar Adelar, the first name is that of Al Bowly, as singer and ukulele player, accompanied by Adelar on the piano.

Twenty-four ensembles are mentioned, and were known, all label issues are listed, including those which entered foreign catalogues, giving their catalogue numbers. Many of the titles are of American or British compositions, generally in German translations, sometimes bracketed in English. Each side of a disc gives the vocalist/s, sometimes the name of the film or stage show from which the number comes, the lyricists and the composers.

Also given are the exact dates of the recordings, where known and the location of the recordings. All known takes are given.

Some of the Electrola discs were available from Hayes and listed in the Gramophone Co. Ltd.'s "His Master's Voice" German Catalogues. Die Goldene Sieben (The Golden Seven) was one band available on HMVs from Hayes.

Mitja Nikisch and his Symphonic Jazz Orchestra (symphonisch besetzten Jazz-Orchester) had sides released on English Parlophone as well as his standard orchestra on HMVs German Catalogue.

Die 3 Odeon-Virtuosen (The Three Odeon Virtuosos) had some sides put out on English Parlophone - and The Lewis (Ludwig) Ruth band had standard U.K. HMV issues (some were also on Victor's).

The period covered ranges from 1913 to 1960, and all are pre-micro groove 78 rpm recordings.

The price of this volume (272 pages of listings) is **100 DM**, which does not include postage. The previous three volumes are similarly priced.

This volume and its three predecessors are available from **Rainer E. Lotz**, [REDACTED] Bonn 2, Germany. For further details telephone [REDACTED] or fax: [REDACTED]

**Frank Andrews**

### **Sound and Vision Yearbook**

#### **1995/96 edited by Andrew Emmerson**

This handbook has just arrived on my desk. It is an essential tool for the serious collector of gramophones, phonographs and their associated paraphernalia. Within its 96 pages there is a mine of information about almost every sort of collecting hobby that is connected with sound and vision. As many people realise, our hobby has many links with others like music box collecting, television collecting and wireless collecting. If you require information on who to contact in any matter relating to these hobbies (and/or the other hundred or so listed) the chances are that this yearbook will be able to point you in the right direction.

At the modest asking price this is an absolute must for the collector. I can thoroughly recommend this book and it is available direct from the publishers **Sunrise Press**, 2-4 Brook Street, Bampton, Devon EX16 9LY at £3.50 plus postage.

**Chris Hamilton**

# REVIEW



## Aureliano Pertile: Tutte le Registrazioni Effettuate in Studio Edizione del TIMAClub. CLAMA DisCo CD-23/1-8

In 1885, within a few weeks of each other, and in the same small Italian town, two great tenors were born. They were Giovanni Martinelli and Aureliano Pertile. The first made his career in the United States, the other mainly in Europe. Both had strong ringing voices and, to an extent, shared the same declamatory style of singing. Both recorded prolifically, and both were highly regarded in their day. For record collectors, Martinelli is still a familiar name; but Pertile? How well is he known today?

The present set of CDs provides the opportunity of assessing this once-famous tenor. It contains all his studio recordings other than those of complete operas, and there is also an isolated radio recording of 1939. The transfers are good, and virtually all the original records were excellent copies. There are 176 separate items in the discography and the titles include many repeats allowing one to assess the singer's progress over the years between 1922 and 1942.

Progress? In experience, yes, but in vocal art no. Pertile made his first records when he was already 37, and perhaps his voice was already past its prime. He presents his arias with a rare passion, increasingly emphasising his expression with frequent use of aspirates, palpitation and sobs. But yes, he **can** sing tenderly, almost in the true bel canto style, and this shows now and then, for example in his *Lohengrin* arias. But unfortunately, much of his singing, especially in the electrics of the 1930s, is forceful bluster. On top of this, there is a strong vibrato and a bright edge to the tone, the whole wearing on the ear; this is not an artefact of the CD transfers, it is present on the one Pertile record in my collection (nos 1 and 2 in the

discography as it happens). Perhaps this all went down better in the opera house?

Starting in late 1922, Pertile cut twenty sides for Columbia, and happily, these are technically good. They were followed by 42 for Pathé, of relatively poor sound quality (although Herman Klein praises one of these both for the singing and the technical quality, in a review of 1927, the 1924 record not having been released, in Britain at least, until December 1926!). Then there are seventeen acoustic Fonotipias followed by 25 electric Fonotipias. From 1927 to 1932 he recorded 47 sides for HMV, generally good although the balance between voice and orchestra is surprisingly poor on one or two early sides. The main sessions end with 21 Columbias recorded in 1932 and 1935. The last session is for Telefunken in 1942, four selections from *Otello* with good sound and some fine singing too.

On the evidence of this admirable compilation, Pertile was a great singer with flaws that become increasingly evident as time went by. His records were invariably reviewed favourably by Klein in *The Gramophone* (mainly the HMVs, with the occasional Fonotipia, released on the Parlophone label, and that isolated Pathé). Klein, who had heard Pertile at Covent Garden, although noting the singer's strong vibrato, praises him as a robust tenor; but to say that "Pertile's voice is at its best reminds me not a little of Caruso, it records just as perfectly, which is saying much", much indeed - rather too much, I suggest.

The CDs themselves are conveniently packaged in four slim-line double cases. They are accompanied by an excellent hard-cover CD-sized book of over 200 pages. The well-illustrated contents cover Pertile's career, the operas he sang in, a complete discography (including unpublished takes and descriptions of his complete opera recordings) and an assessment of some of his recordings. All this is in Italian, but there is an English summary, and of course the discography presents little in the way of a language barrier. This is a set for the Pertile enthusiast, who will not be disappointed. This set is available from **TIMAClub, CP83 - 00600, Castelnuovo Di Porto (RM), ITALY**. Price 150,000 lire plus 10,000 lire postage.

George Taylor

## REPORTS

### Midlands Group Meeting at Carrs Lane Methodist Centre, Birmingham on Saturday 18th March 1995

A few of the regulars were absent but an average number of supporters were present to listen to our latest now well-established two-part programmes.

We still have a certain amount of buying and selling of gramophone items both before the evening's programme and during the interval. Unfortunately not too many machines turn up for sale these days.

Chairman Eddie Dunn was the presenter of the first programme. This was on tape and his subject was operatic arias that rarely turn up or are slightly unusual for various reasons.

He started with the Czech tenor Karel Burrian singing *My Colleague Caruso* (HMV 2-72184) which was new to most of us. Among others we heard were:

A private acetate of the soprano Kyra Vayne singing *Vissi d'Arte* from Puccini's *Tosca*. Her voice was so striking that we could not understand why she was not better known.

*The Postillion Lied* from *Der Postillon von Lonjuneau* attractively sung by the tenor Rudolf Serlach-Rushak.

A beautiful rendering by Paul Robeson of the controversial song *Joe Hill*.

A V-Disc of Richard Crooks singing the tenor aria *Una Furtiva Lagrima* from Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore*.



Other vocal artists heard were Giovanni Brevario (tenor) and Nazzareno de Angelis (bass).

Our thanks go to Eddie for a well-prepared programme of lesser known but top line artists.

The programme for the second half was given by Gerry Lee and Peter Dempsey. This was also on tape. We expected serious vocal items by Gigli and McCormack but were pleasantly surprised to at the variety of performers chosen and the variety of material.

Firstly Peter introduced Giacomo Lauri-Volpi singing *Una Versina* from Donizetti's *La Favorita*. This was recorded at a live performance given when the artist was 70 years old. Gerry then let us hear Mario Lanza in *Arrivederci Roma*. Lanza sang the verses alternatively with a girl he had earlier heard singing in the street and had brought into the recording studio. Peter then played Jimmy 'Schnozzle' Durante singing *The Day I Read a Book*. Gerry returned to the fray by playing us John McCormack's 8-year old son singing *It's a long way to Tipperary*. This was recorded on 31st March 1915. Peter followed with George Formby Senior singing *Grandfather's Clock*.

Other items played by one or other of our presenters included pieces by Elvis Presley, the Pavarotti's (father and son), Bing Crosby and Noel Coward.

Peter and Gerry ended their evening with a live performance of *A Perfect Day*. Thanks to Peter and Gerry for an excellent programme full of variety which was ideally complimented Eddie's earlier presentation.

**Geoff Howl**

## **Midlands Group Record Fair held at St. Matthew's Church Hall, Wolverhampton on Saturday 25th March 1995.**

In spite of previous exhortations to members and friends to support this venture, we experienced a poor attendance to a fair packed to capacity with machines, 78s, Pathé discs, Edison Diamond Discs and every aspect of bits and pieces you could think of.

The venue is ideal for this event. There is a modern building with excellent car parking facilities. All we want is customers!

Nevertheless every one present seemed to enjoy the day and we still managed to make a small profit for the Midland Group funds.

**Geoff Howl**

## **Northern Group Meeting held at Wigan Pier on 19th March 1995**

For our first meeting of the new season Mr Derek Parker presented an excellent programme on the subject of George Formby, which included both George Senior and Junior.

He gave an insight into the men behind the records, giving details of their personalities and lives. This lecture was illustrated using cylinders for George Senior and 78s for George Junior, the recordings being played on an Edison Home Phonograph with Cygnet Horn and on an E.M.G. Mk10a Gramophone (owned and operated by Miles Mallinson, the Group Chairman).

The 'George Formby Room' at Wigan Pier was duly decorated with George Formby posters and pictures - to complete and enhance the atmosphere, and we think this is the first time the venue has been used for this purpose.

The programme included such items as *When Father said he'd pay the rent* by George Senior to *When I'm cleaning windows* and *The Chinese Laundry Blues* by

George Junior, although the highlight appeared to be *I'm going down the Old Coal Hole* - when the audience almost 'masked' the sound of George with their own laughter and merriment.

The audience came from as far away as Nottingham, North Yorks., Cheshire and Cumbria. All seemingly enjoyed the day, although perhaps, some found difficulty in finding the venue, as one or two turned up late!

This event has certainly put us "on the map", and I hope that future events will be supported as well as this one was. Thank you to all who made this event possible, especially Derek and Pauline Parker.

Our next event will have already happened by the time you read this report, when we will have been for a 'Steamboat Picnic' with portables on a private steam launch on Lake Windermere - if it rained we'll have had afternoon tea in the boathouse! Let's hope for a really lovely day.

Our July meeting will be at our Chairman's home in Barrow, when a Concours d'Élégance competition for the best phonograph and gramophone will be held, followed by afternoon tea. Details of this and any other function can be had from our Secretary, Ann Mallinson, tel: [REDACTED]

Miles would like to thank everyone for their kind thoughts and wishes during his recent illness - he is now much improved, but must take things easily.

**Ann Mallinson**



Miles Mallinson (with glasses) and Derek Parker at Wigan Pier

# BOOKLIST NEWS

## from Don Moore

Books, it seems, are like London buses, you get nothing for ages then along come several all together. Certainly that's what it seems to the writer, who is responsible for keeping the Booklist ticking over.

Suddenly we have four new books or to be precise three new books and one revised reprint. All these are available from the Booklist and are listed below:

### Catalogue No. BD 32

*The Edison Cylinder Phonograph Companion* by George Frow. This sells at £30 plus postage and packing. This will be reviewed for *Hillandale News* by Peter Martland and I understand he is impressed by it.

### Catalogue No. BD 33

*Edison, Inventing the Century* by Neil Baldwin. This is an American publication weighing at two pounds and costing £25 plus postage and packing. This is a different biography of Thomas Alva Edison portraying him warts and all. Viewing Edison from a different perspective the book is a good read with a fascinating wealth of detail.

### Catalogue No. BD 34

*The Almost Complete 78rpm Record Dating Guide (II)* by Steven C. Barr. Published and distributed by Yesterday Once Again it is now available from the Booklist at £13.50 plus postage and packing. I will not attempt to review it but instead refer the reader to the Editor's comments on page 197 in issue 201 of *Hillandale News*. I will only add that from my own point of view it contains many useful snippets of information for the novice. If Steven Barr reads this, please no more kittens!

### Catalogue No. BD 01

Finally the return of a popular seller updated in its new print. *Hayes on Record* by Peter Hall and Colin Brown. An interesting journey through this greatest of record companies. Price is still £8 plus postage and packing.

## Obituary - Walter L. Welch

It is with regret that we report the death of Professor Walter L. Welch from Alzheimer's Disease on March 31st 1995. He was a native of Syracuse, New York, and his name will be familiar to many phonograph and gramophone collectors as co-author with his friend and colleague Oliver Read, of *From Tinfoil to Stereo*, published in Indianapolis in 1959 and as a long-time experimenter with sound recording, often based on Edison cylinders and discs, and as a patent holder on re-recording apparatus.

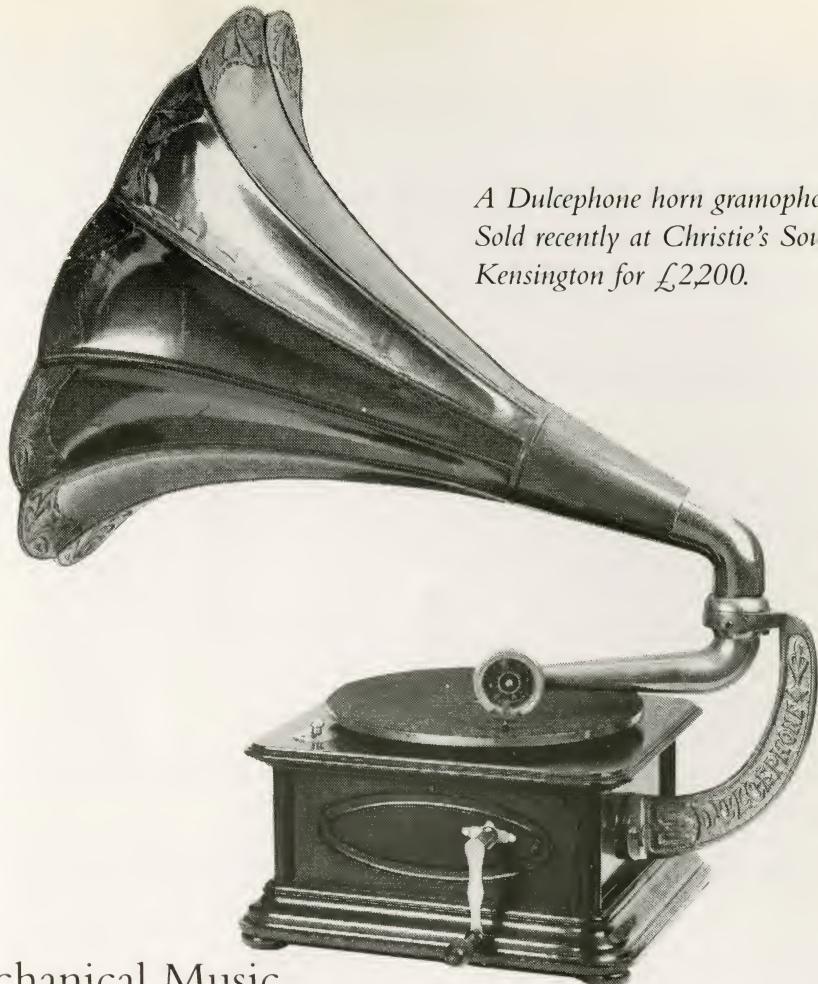
He started working in the Syracuse area as magician, followed by a series of odd jobs, but made his first contacts with Edison after the end of the war in 1918 with his first full-time employment in the advertising and display department of the Clark Music Company. Melville Clark conducted trial recordings of the Clark harp in the Edison music department at West Orange, Welch acted as his assistant, and this interest led to his demonstrating Edison machines to Clark's customers and eventually managing Tone Tests with the Edison Disc Phonograph and Edison artists in Syracuse.

At the age of 37 and with a wife and two daughters he returned to high school and in 1946 was awarded a BA in architecture at Syracuse University, becoming by 1965 a professor emeritus in landscape architecture at the State University of New York College on Environmental Science and Forestry.

Welch's passion throughout his life was phonographs and records, and he amassed a sizeable holding; many years were spent re-recording old records to preserve their sound, and international recognition and awards from many countries followed. He wrote 5 books on the industry.

In 1956 Walter Welch was awarded Associate Edison Pioneer standing by the Edison Pioneers for his work. Nine years later this led to the establishment of the first Syracuse University Audio Archive - Edison Re-recording Laboratory. Welch became Organiser and Founding Director-Curator. It is to his credit that the second edition of *From Tinfoil to Stereo* was translated and published in its entirety by the Japanese Audio Society. With his death the followers of sound-recording history have lost yet another link with the latter days of the Edison Company.

George Frow (with help with material from John C. Fesler and Bob Koolakian)



*A Dulcephone horn gramophone.  
Sold recently at Christie's South  
Kensington for £2,200.*

## Mechanical Music

Auction dates 1995: April 6th; July 6th; December 14th

Enquiries: Christopher Proudfoot on [REDACTED]

or George Glastris on [REDACTED]

Catalogues: Julia Chinnery on [REDACTED] (sales)

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